

I wish to register my emphatic objections to NPRM 02-33, "Appropriate Framework for Broadband Access to the Internet over Wireline Facilities", because treating broadband Internet access as an information service (as proposed by NPRM 02-33) misrepresents the qualities that have made the Internet so important for learning.

Having used the Internet for education for more than a decade, I have heard such claims before, usually accompanied by the mantra "content is king." The Internet is much more than an "information service" because everyone is a potential provider, and collaborator. The Internet is a place where knowledge is built, not simply transmitted. It is much more accurately described as a communications medium, because of the unparalleled permutations possible among consumers and creators of knowledge.

I have walked the talk: my students' Internet achievements are documented in the Scientific American, Los Angeles Times, the Learning Channel and other media. I am the co-founder of the Online Internet Institute <http://oii.org>, which was started with funding by the National Science Foundation. OII is committed to reshaping the nature of teaching and learning by helping educators, students and parents use the Internet to improve achievement in the classroom, and beyond. OII provides the tools for people to learn, interact and grow in ways necessary for the 21st Century. This is far more than providing content, or access to an "information service."

My work also involves presenting at numerous state, regional and international conferences, conducting staff development workshops and seminars for parents, teachers, school administrators and others involved in systemic school reform, including the US Department of Education, National Science Foundation, the Milken Exchange on Educational Technology, the Singapore and Malaysia ministries of education, and others. I am a member of the advisory board for the Digital Divide Clearinghouse, and WNET's Internet in Action telecourse on professional development. These relationships are supported by the interactive, collaborative nature of the Internet as it is presently conceived.

The students, teachers, mentors, citizens and others with whom I have interacted over the past decade do not see themselves as subscribers to an "information service." Rather, we see ourselves as an emerging set of interlocking communities, forming a much larger global community. While it may serve particular economic interests to portray this as an "information service" it is more about building relationships quite beyond any particular content that is transmitted. The value of the Internet is the people who bring it to life, and not the bits that go back and forth.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ferdi Serim